

Benzodiazepine Tapering Algorithm

Has the patient been on benzodiazepine for over 6 months?

- Consider initiating Benzo/Stimulant/hypnotic agreement
- Consider UA testing with PPMD
- Consider PMP review

NO

YES

Recommend up to 2 month taper

Resources

Providence Recovery Center
916 Pacific Ave
Everett, WA
425-258-7390

Evergreen Recovery Center
2601 Summit Ave
Everett, WA
425-258-2407

Swedish Addiction Recovery - Ballard
5300 Tallman Ave N.W.
Seattle, WA
206-781-6048

References:

Myrick H. Malcom R, Randal PK, et. al A double – blind trial of gabapentin versus lorazepam in the treatment of alcohol withdrawal. Alcohol Clin Exp Res. 2009 Sep; 33(9):1582.8

Voris J. Smith NL, Rao SM, et al. Gabapentin for the treatment of ethanol withdrawal. Substance Abuse 2003, June 24, (2): 129-32.

Bozikas V. Petrikis P. Gamvrula K, et al. Treatment of alcohol withdrawal with gabapentin. Prog Neuropsychopharmacol Biol Psychiatry. 2002 Jan; 26(1):197-9.

Crockford D. White WD, Campbell B. Gabapentin use in benzodiazepine dependence and detoxification. Can J Psychiatry 2001 Apr; 46(30): 287

Nov 2015

Did patient have an anxiety disorder before initiation of benzodiazepine(s)?

- Consider GAD-7 and PHQ-2 (PHQ-9)

NO

YES

See Benzo Taper Tables:

- Taper benzodiazepine over 2-6 months (longer for higher doses)
- Patients experiencing difficulty with taper may benefit from:
- Gabapentin 300 mg HS the day before stopping the final 10-20% of benzodiazepine dose.
 - Titrate to gabapentin 300 mg TID - QID
 - Continue gabapentin for 3 months or longer depending on benzodiazepine dose and duration

Prior to beginning taper:

1. Initiate an SSRI
2. Over 3 weeks, increase dose to moderate or high (sertraline 100-200 mg daily or equivalent)
3. For breakthrough panic attacks, consider either:
 - a. Propranolol 10-20mg before event
 - b. Hydroxyzine 10mg upto QID (avoid in elderly)

Consider alternatives for:

- 1) Sleep
 - a) Sleep hygiene
 - b) Medication at HS
 - i) Doxepin 10mg/mL 3-6 mg at bedtime or
 - ii) Melatonin 0.5-6mg 30 min to 4 hours before HS
 - iii) Trazodone 25-50 mg at bedtime or
 - iv) Nortriptyline 10-20mg at bedtime (avoid in elderly) or
 - v) Diphenhydramine –avoid in elderly
 - c) Consider BH referral for sleep CBT
 - d) Consider sleep referral if 30 days meds ineffective
- 2) Restless leg syndrome: pramipexole or ropinirole
- 3) Spasticity – baclofen or tizanidine

Initiate benzo taper using 16 week taper plan. Recommend monthly assessment OV

If SSRI initiation and planned taper not successful or resisted, obtain Behavioral Health consult